



## 2009 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 74

April 16, 2010 – Introduced by Senators COGGS, CARPENTER, COWLES, DARLING, DECKER, ELLIS, ERPENBACH, S. FITZGERALD, GROTHMAN, HANSEN, HARSDFORF, HOLPERIN, HOPPER, JAUCH, KANAVAS, KAPANKE, KEDZIE, KREITLOW, A. LASEE, LASSA, LAZICH, LEHMAN, LEIBHAM, MILLER, OLSEN, PLALE, RISSE, ROBSON, SCHULTZ, SULLIVAN, TAYLOR, VINEHOUT and WIRCH, cosponsored by Representatives YOUNG, BALLWEG, BARCA, BENEDICT, BERCEAU, BERNARD SCHABER, BIES, BLACK, BROOKS, CLARK, COLON, CULLEN, DANOU, DAVIS, DEXTER, FIELDS, J. FITZGERALD, FRISKE, GARTHWAITE, GOTTLIEB, GRIGSBY, GUNDERSON, GUNDRUM, HEBL, HILGENBERG, HINTZ, HIXSON, HONADEL, HRAYCHUCK, HUBLER, HUEBSCH, JORGENSEN, KAUFERT, KERKMAN, KESSLER, KESTELL, KLEEFISCH, KNODL, KRAMER, KRUSICK, LEMAHIEU, LOTHIAN, MASON, MEYER, MILROY, MOLEPSKE JR., MONTGOMERY, MURSAU, MURTHA, NASS, NELSON, NERISON, NEWCOMER, NYGREN, A. OTT, J. OTT, PARISI, PASCH, PETERSEN, PETROWSKI, POCAN, POPE-ROBERTS, PRIDEMORE, RADCLIFFE, RHOADES, RICHARDS, RIPP, ROTH, ROYS, SCHNEIDER, SEIDEL, SHERIDAN, SHERMAN, SHILLING, SINICKI, SMITH, SOLETSKI, SPANBAUER, STASKUNAS, STEINBRINK, STONE, STRACHOTA, SUDER, TAUCHEN, TOLES, TOWNSEND, TURNER, VAN AKKEREN, VAN ROY, VOS, VRUWINK, VUKMIR, A. WILLIAMS, M. WILLIAMS, WOOD, ZEPNICK, ZIEGELBAUER, ZIGMUNT and ZIPPERER. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1     **Relating to:** the retirement of Russ Whitesel, Senior Staff Attorney, Legislative  
2             Council Staff, following a long and distinguished career in nonpartisan service  
3             to the Wisconsin legislature.

4             Whereas, Russ Whitesel was born at Camp White near Medford, Oregon, grew  
5     up in Iowa City, home to a Big Ten rival, and graduated from Northern Illinois  
6     University; and

7             Whereas, Russ exemplified the idealistic spirit of the 1960s, serving as a Peace  
8     Corps volunteer in Turkey, where he taught English to middle schoolers and  
9     developed a budding interest in education; and

10            Whereas, upon earning a master's degree in public administration from  
11     Syracuse University, Russ came to Wisconsin, working for two years in the capital  
12     budget office in the Department of Administration, followed by two years in

1 then–Central Administration at the University of Wisconsin, where he shepherded  
2 the capital project approvals necessary to establish the Green Bay and Parkside  
3 campuses; and

4 Whereas, soon after moving to Madison, Russ met and married his wife Liz,  
5 with whom he will celebrate 40 years of marriage this year; and

6 Whereas, sparked by the opportunities for public service, Russ enrolled in the  
7 University of Wisconsin Law School, graduated in January 1975, and was  
8 immediately hired at the Legislative Council by the legendary Bonnie Reese, in  
9 whose formidable footsteps he followed as an education specialist; and

10 Whereas, Russ diligently staffed innumerable Legislative Council study  
11 committees, crafting complex legislation in areas ranging from mediation and  
12 arbitration law and consumer protection to school finance and trade secrets; and

13 Whereas, Russ provided sage legal and procedural advice to countless  
14 legislative standing committees, focusing on K–12 and higher education, consumer  
15 protection, labor, and elections; and

16 Whereas, Russ has been a vibrant and engaged member of the council staff for  
17 over 35 years, cheerfully mentoring junior colleagues; sharing his considerable  
18 institutional wisdom; organizing noon–hour book group discussions; expounding on  
19 the intricacies of fantasy baseball; and regaling his co–workers (and anyone else who  
20 would listen) with his twin parables of “The Floating Opera” and “Everything  
21 Relates”; and

22 Whereas, Russ has served as the council’s goodwill ambassador, nurturing  
23 relationships with legislators and staffers on both sides of the aisle; leading  
24 pre–session orientation for new legislators; fostering good relations with the judicial

1 and executive branches; and hosting international delegations visiting the state  
2 capitol; and

3 Whereas, Russ' commitment to public service has extended well beyond the  
4 office, to his work for the State Bar of Wisconsin, as a member of the Public Records  
5 Board, and on the capital campaign for Madison's Sequoyia Branch Library; and

6 Whereas, Russ' compassion for his fellow human beings was exemplified when  
7 he volunteered for duty as a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, traveling to New  
8 Orleans for a month to assist with disaster relief efforts in the aftermath of  
9 Hurricane Katrina; and

10 Whereas, Russ epitomizes what it means to be a good citizen of the community  
11 and the world; and

12 Whereas, Russ' upbeat attitude, insider savvy, and willingness to assist will be  
13 greatly missed by all who worked with him; now, therefore, be it

14 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the members of the  
15 Wisconsin legislature honor and commend Russ Whitesel for his 35 years of devoted  
16 service to the Wisconsin legislature and wish him many fruitful, active, and  
17 enjoyable years in retirement; and, be it further

18 ***Resolved, That*** the senate chief clerk shall provide copies of this joint  
19 resolution to Russ and his wife, Liz, and their daughters, Leah and Emily.

20 (END)